

USAID/THE GAMBIA
ANNUAL REPORT FY 2002

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Annex D: Non-presence Countries –The Gambia

A. Contribution to Food Security

Catholic Relief Service (CRS) has been supporting humanitarian development and relief projects in The Gambia since 1964. In March 2001, CRS completed the implementation of a three and a half-year DAP, comprised of the Child Survival Project and the Sesame Growers' Association (SGA) Institutional Strengthening Project.

The Gambia Program's Food Security goal is "to improve household food security and women's economic empowerment". CRS/Gambia's local partners, the National Women Farmers Association (NAWFA) and the Gambian Food and Nutrition Association (GAFNA), shared responsibilities in addressing the three food security components of access, availability and utilization. Access and availability were addressed by NAWFA through agricultural interventions aimed at increasing sesame productivity and profitability. GAFNA addressed the issue of utilization through interventions aimed at improving household nutrition and promoting positive maternal and child health care practices.

The Sesame Growers' Association (SGA) Project aimed to empower women so that they are better able to meet household food security needs. Through the SGA project, CRS/GM promoted sesame as a cash crop for women farmers, providing an alternative food and income source. The program demonstrated success in creating the opportunity to increase the income of women farmers, and thereby increasing access, which will improve food security.

The Child Survival Project concentrated on improving health and nutrition by promoting improved infant and child feeding practices, improved maternal health and nutrition, and improved home based care of childhood illnesses.

B. Effectiveness of the Program in Achieving Results¹

Child Survival Project: The Child Survival Project (CSP) was able to make substantial progress in achieving its objectives on improving maternal and child health care and nutrition in project areas. FY 2000's exit surveys showed that chronic malnutrition in project areas decreased, thereby improving long-term food security problems. In addition, more women received iron during pregnancy (98% of women received iron during pregnancy), attended antenatal consultations earlier on in pregnancy (51.3% women had their first prenatal care visit during first or second trimester), and consumed more nutritional food during pregnancy (45% women increased food intake during pregnancy).

The CSP significantly increased community awareness of health-related issues and the benefits of good nutrition. CRS and GAFNA were successful in creating considerable human resource development at the community level. Community Management Committees (CMCs) received a variety of leadership and management training. Collaboration between the implementing partner and government health officials was strengthened. GAFNA's activities were integrated with Gambia's Department of State for Health (DOSH) Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services.

The Sesame Growers' Association Institutional Strengthening Project: Operations for the NAWFA secretariat, which was established in the latter part of FY 1999, commenced in FY 2000. This establishment has been an outstanding example of institutional building through a thoroughly democratic process. The creation of a constitution through participatory approaches helped create a strong and viable organization. The organization was further strengthened in FY 2000 through regular participatory meetings between the NAWFA Secretariat and the National Executive Committee (NEC) who were elected from the SGA membership. The second Annual

¹ For detailed information on this section, please refer to the FY 2000 Results Report submitted by CRS in March 2001, and to the final Impact Evaluation Report dated October 2000.

General Meeting (AGM) also took place at the end of the year, which was comprised of the NAWFA Secretariat, the NEC, and the democratically elected representatives from each of the 72 SGAs.

NAWFA was able to export approximately 200 metric tons of white sesame to an international market in Holland. This was a good marketing experience for NAWFA. In the future, NAWFA's participation in the marketing of sesame will focus on the purchase of sesame and negotiations with buyers at the SGA level. CRS and NAWFA were able to initiate important linkages in the areas of sesame production and marketing with some of the major sesame importers in Europe during an agricultural exposition held in Germany. The SGA project was honored to have been selected for representation at EXPO 2000 in recognition of its achievements in raising rural women's export earning through sesame cultivation.

A Final Impact Evaluation was completed in August/September 2000. Results of the evaluation recommended project continuation. In order to ensure successful completion of the DAP, CRS/GM, in collaboration with its partners developed an extensive phase-out plan for the FY98-00 DAP, which was submitted to USAID in December 2000. Additionally, CRS/GM funded an assessment of GAFNA and NAWFA to explore potential restructuring options and management reorganization for each agency.

The new Senegambia DAP submitted by CRS was approved by BHR/FFP at the end of December 2001 for a five-year period (FY 2002 - FY 2006). The DAP proposes to increase food security in the most vulnerable regions of Senegal and The Gambia (Senegambia) by addressing some of the underlying causes of food insecurity. The overall goal of the Senegambia DAP is to improve the level of food security of targeted rural households and vulnerable groups in Senegal and The Gambia by 2006. By working closely with local partners, community-based organizations and the host governments, CRS will realize its goal through the achievement of two strategic objectives: (1) Improved economic access to food for farm-households engaged in sesame production in targeted areas of Senegal and The Gambia by 2006, and (2) Increased availability of food for vulnerable persons in Senegal and The Gambia by 2006.

Results achieved under this DAP will be reported in next year's Annual Report.